



Understanding COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy among the Black Community in East Oakland: A Qualitative Study at Roots Community Health Center

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Background

- Black communities have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic compared to non-Black communities in the US

Community Partner

- Roots Community Health Center (<https://rootsclinic.org/>) is a non-profit, whose mission is to uplift those impacted by systemic inequities and poverty, through medical and behavioral health care, health navigation, workforce enterprises, housing, outreach, and advocacy.

Objective

- To increase COVID-19 vaccination rates among the Black community in East Oakland, Roots Clinic conducted a qualitative study to understand the underlying motivators and barriers around the COVID-19 vaccines in the Black community

Project Description & Methodology

- Three in-depth semi-structured interviews and two focus groups were conducted to better understand participant's experience with COVID-19 in East Oakland between October and November. Study participants were randomly selected by Roots Clinic's staff.
- The interviews and focus groups were conducted in English on zoom. They were transcribed, coded, and analyzed using thematic analysis.

Results

Major themes	Sub-themes
Poorly Disseminated Information about COVID 19 (from all sources)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> News outlets and social media COVID-19 myths Researching COVID info via health-related websites Accessibility to resources
Mistrust of the medical system and the COVID-19 vaccine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conflicting information about the COVID-19 vaccine Bodily autonomy/ pressure to –or not- take the vaccine Systemic abandonment Vaccine Hesitancy Lack of trust in the medical system
Coping strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relying on social circles Use of faith/ prayer or meditation Disengagement from social media and televised news Social isolation
Access (or lack of) to culturally considerate care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Found a location to receive vaccine Numerous unanswered COVID related questions Trusts only Roots staff to provide COVID related information Traveled outside of health plan for COVID related care
Motivators to take the vaccine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External pressure from employers To support family members deemed “high risk” Desire to travel Loss of a family member or friend to COVID-19

Lessons Learned

- Many factors influence vaccine hesitancy among the Black community, including mistrust of the system and the COVID-19 vaccine
- Roots should provide more community-centered COVID-19 educational resources to its clients to address knowledge gaps
- Roots should center trusted community members and partners in its outreach efforts.

Future Directions

- Continue to access the evolving needs of the community
- Pop-up clinics
- Contact unvaccinated community members and provide additional resources
- Offer vaccine incentive as encouragement to become vaccinated
- Barber shop project

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